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Tens of thousands of Afghan interpreters and their families are in peril as U.S. bureaucracies quibble over process.
By Ken Olsen



ON THE COVER

Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, "The Old Guard," place U.S. flags at headstones in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on May 27, 2021. The annual tradition, known as "flags in," is carried out prior to Memorial Day to honor the nation's fallen veterans. DoD



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Every military headstone has a story

In an Instagram photo that captured hearts the moment she posted it, Marine Sgt. Nicole Gee, 23, cradled an Afghan baby in her arms.

"I love my job," she wrote. Six days later, on Aug. 26, 2021, Gee and 12 other U.S. servicemembers were killed in a suicide bombing outside Kabul Airport during a chaotic withdrawal of American forces.

This Memorial Day, we remember them, and more than 1 million men and women who have died in U.S. military service. We dedicate the last Monday in May to their memory, while acknowledging that for our Gold Star families, the mourning is not limited to 24 hours a year.

We benefit from fallen Americans' sacrifices every time we exercise our constitutional rights. We are able to speak freely, possess a firearm, peaceably assemble and vote. Public officials don't secure us these rights. Rather, they have been paid for in blood by those who willingly risked their lives to protect ours, from the founding of our nation to today. As the saying goes, "All gave some, some gave all."

They are not numbers, but names and faces. One whose story has only recently been told is Army Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe, who posthumously received the Medal of Honor last December. On Oct. 17, 2005, his Bradley Fighting Vehicle struck an improvised explosive device while on patrol near Samarra, Iraq. His uniform drenched in fuel and on fire, Cashe pulled six soldiers and an interpreter from the wreck, suffering burns to three-quarters of his body. When two helicopters arrived to evacuate the wounded, he insisted on walking off the battlefield himself. During the medevac flight to Balad Air Base, Cashe repeatedly asked after his men: "How are my guys? What's going on with them? Where are they at?" Three weeks later, on Nov. 8, he died from his injuries.

From the world wars to Korea, from Vietnam to the Middle East, every U.S. military headstone has a story, and every one is inspirational in its own way. Together, they bear witness to the selflessness described in John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Paul E. Dillard

THE AMERICAN Legion MAGAZINE

Veterans Strengthening America

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 Indianapolis, IN 46206

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The American Legion (ISSN 0886-1234) is published monthly by The American Legion, 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216. Periodicals postage paid at Indianapolis, IN 46204 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The American Legion, Data Services, P.O. Box 1954, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Canada Post International Publications Mail (Canadian Distribution) Sales Agreement No. PM40063731. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: Station A, P.O. Box, Windsor ON N9A 6J5. Re-entered second-class mail matter at Manila Central Post Office dated Dec. 22, 1991.



Printed in USA
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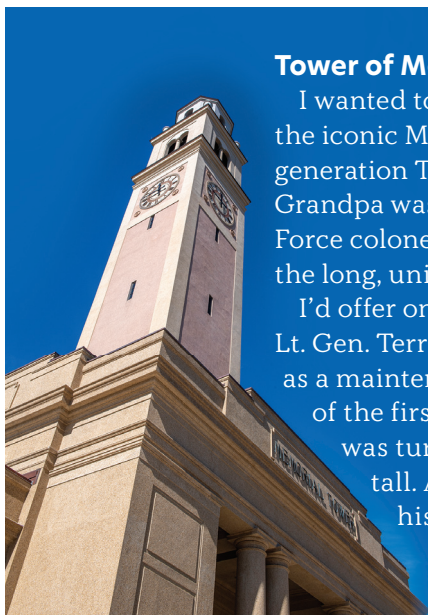
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Tower of Meaning

I wanted to express my appreciation for Jeff Stoffer's wonderful article about the iconic Memorial Tower and military museum at LSU (March). I'm a third-generation Tiger, following my father and grandfather. All of us served; Grandpa was a Navy engineer during World War II, my father was a retired Air Force colonel, and I retired as an Air Force lieutenant colonel. All of us revere the long, unique history of LSU as the "Ole War Skule."

I'd offer one significant addition to "The Long Purple Line": retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Terry L. Gabreski. She graduated from LSU in 1973, was commissioned as a maintenance officer through Officer Training School in 1974, and was one of the first women in the male-dominated career field. She joined to fly but was turned away on three separate appeals because she was only 5 feet tall. At the time, she was one of the highest-ranking women in the history of the U.S. military. Certainly a Tiger we are all proud of.

Bill Brigman, New Orleans

Photo by Bill Feig

The sidebar on LSU military alumni states that Lt. Gen. Troy H. Middleton commanded the 8th Army. He actually commanded the VIII Corps in the European theater.

Jeff Lyall, Port Sanilac, Mich.

A New State of Mind

Alan Dowd's article (March) states that an amendment needs ratification by three-fifths of the states. This is incorrect. Article V of the Constitution states that an amendment requires ratification by three-fourths of the states.

Karl E. Stuvengen, Orfordville, Wis.

Famous Firsts

Being female and a retired military member, I always enjoy when you mention "us." I've been a faithful viewer of "Tough As Nails," and was proud of Lia Mort's win last season. I held my breath every second of her wall climb to claim the truck. Also of note was the two-page spread "Famous Firsts." Thank you for bringing to light our accomplishments.

*MaryAnn Wolek
Borcherding,
Vancouver,
Wash.*

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

Include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters published are subject to editing. Due to the volume of mail received, not every letter can be acknowledged.

*The American Legion Magazine,
P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206
magazine@legion.org*

"If the measure of a life is how many people you helped and served along the way, then John Sommer lived one hell of a life. He was a combat medic in Vietnam, a longtime leader of The American Legion, a proud Legion Rider, and - by all accounts - a great friend."



Legion Archives

VA Secretary Denis McDonough, in a March 15 tweet about the passing of former American Legion Washington Office Executive Director John Sommer Jr. Sommer was instrumental in gaining government acknowledgement of post-traumatic stress disorder and conditions related to Agent Orange exposure as service-connected disabilities among Vietnam War veterans. He also worked to establish the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and the Vietnam Women's Memorial on the National Mall. Sommer passed away March 11 at 74.

3,500+ Entries added to the American Legion Memorial Database since its launch in November 2016. See what's in your area, then add your own, at legion.org/memorials.

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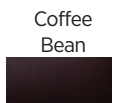
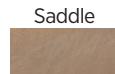
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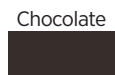
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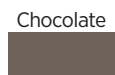
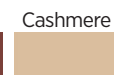
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I enjoyed your salute to women, but noticed a name that was not listed: Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught, the first woman to deploy with an Air Force bomber unit, and the first woman to reach the rank of brigadier general from the comptroller field.

I met Vaught around 1983 or so, at a MEPS station at what was then Gunter Air Force Station in Alabama. When my commander introduced me to her, Vaught said, "I know you. You're the one who destroyed two of my vehicles." How could I forget a general who called me out personally? She said it with a smile, though.

Ulysses McDowell, Charlotte, N.C.



Your salute to women in the military missed Sherian Grace Cadoria, the first female African-American to attain general officer rank in the Army on her promotion to brigadier general in 1985. Raised by her mother, she grew up in a two-room

cottage, walked five miles to school and was picking 250 pounds of cotton a day by age 10. I served with Cadoria in the 1st Logistical Command in Qui Nhon, Vietnam (1968-1969), where she served as protocol officer and was promoted to major. When she retired in 1990 after 29 years, she was the highest-ranking Black woman in the Army.

H. Bick Bicknell, Punta Gorda, Fla.

3,725

American Legion posts that performed Buddy Check operations in the 2020-2021 membership year, providing outreach to no fewer than 234,601 veterans and their families

500

Approximate number of pledges of military and veteran brains since a story on the Concussion Legacy Foundation and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) ran in the January 2020 *American Legion Magazine* - more than double the pledges received the entire previous year

THE PLAYLIST

American Legion videos you don't want to miss.

In Flanders Fields

American Legion Past National Commander John P. "Jake" Comer delivers a stirring recitation of the timeless poem by Canadian Lt. Col. John McCrae, written to honor fallen soldiers of the Great War.

We Shall Keep the Faith

American Legion Past National Commander Denise H. Rohan recites the famous poem by Moina Michael written in response to "In Flanders Fields."

Commander's address in South Carolina

American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard addresses the South Carolina Legislature on the organization's top priorities for 2022.

Visit legion.org/magazine/videos or subscribe to The American Legion's YouTube channel to see, show and share other American Legion videos.



Photo courtesy Derric Grimes

"(Our father) set the example ... We knew it was a way we could help countless people."

Derric Grimes, past commander of **American Legion Post 116, Fuquay-Varina, N.C.**, on his

family's history of blood donation. Grimes' father gave regularly until the FDA banned blood donations from millions of U.S. veterans, servicemembers and dependents who lived in Europe from 1980 to 1996, in an effort to prevent the spread of mad cow disease. The ban was lifted in 2020, allowing Grimes - born at an Army hospital in Germany in 1985 - to donate blood at his post for the first time. Learn more about the Legion's Blood Donor Program at legion.org/security/blood.

Better read this if you are 62 or older and still making mortgage payments.

It's a well-known fact that for many older Americans, the home is their single biggest asset. *With interest rates near historic all-time lows while home values are still high, this combination could create the perfect dynamic for getting the most out of your home equity.*

But, many aren't taking advantage of this unprecedented period. According to new statistics from the mortgage industry, *senior homeowners in the U.S. are now sitting on more than 10.1 trillion dollars* of unused home equity.*

Not only are people living longer than ever before, but there is also greater uncertainty in the economy. With home prices on the rise, ignoring this financial option may prove to be short-sighted when looking for the best long-term outcome.

All things considered, it's not surprising that more than a million homeowners have

already used a government-insured Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) loan to turn their home equity into extra cash for retirement.

It's a fact: no monthly mortgage payments are required with a government-insured HECM loan; however, the borrowers are still responsible for paying for the maintenance of their home, property taxes, homeowner's insurance and, if required, their HOA fees.

It's times like these that your largest asset can be a life saver.

Today, HECM loans are simply an effective way for homeowners 62 and older to get the extra cash they need to enjoy retirement.

Although today's HECM loans have been improved to provide even greater financial protection for homeowners, there are still many misconceptions.

For example, a lot of people mistakenly believe the home must be paid off in full in order to qualify for a HECM loan, which is not the case. In fact, one key advantage of a HECM is that the proceeds will first be

used to pay off any existing liens on the property, which frees up cash flow, a huge blessing for seniors living on a fixed income. Unfortunately, many senior homeowners who might be better off with a HECM loan don't even bother to get more information because of rumors they've heard.

In fact, a recent survey by American Advisors Group (AAG), the nation's number one HECM lender, found that more than 9/10 clients are satisfied with AAG's service.** While these special loans are not for everyone, they can be a real lifesaver for senior homeowners — especially in times like these.

The cash from a HECM loan can be used for almost any purpose. Other common uses include making home improvements, paying off medical bills or helping other family members. Some people simply need the extra cash for everyday expenses while others are now using it as a safety net for financial emergencies.

If you're a homeowner age 62 or older, you owe it to yourself to learn more so that you can make the best decision for your financial future.

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** Based on client satisfaction surveys as of September 13, 2021.

Reverse mortgage loan terms include occupying the home as your primary residence, maintaining the home, paying property taxes and homeowners insurance. Although these costs may be substantial, AAG does not establish an escrow account for these payments. However, a set-aside account can be set up for taxes and insurance, and in some cases may be required. Not all interest on a reverse mortgage is tax-deductible and to the extent that it is, such deduction is not available until the loan is partially or fully repaid.

AAG charges an origination fee, mortgage insurance premium (where required by HUD), closing costs and servicing fees, rolled into the balance of the loan. AAG charges interest on the balance, which grows over time. When the last borrower or eligible non-borrowing spouse dies, sells the home, permanently moves out, or fails to comply with the loan terms, the loan becomes due and payable (and the property may become subject to foreclosure). When this happens, some or all of the equity in the property no longer belongs to the borrowers, who may need to sell the home or otherwise repay the loan balance. V2021.06.21 HYBRID

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EMPs affect all electronics including military and civilian communications, computers, cellphones and transformers ...

Adversaries and potential enemies have current capability to create EMPs with missile capability to deliver high altitude nuclear weapons over the United States ...

Such EMPs can impair our defense capability for as much as five years, thereby compromising U.S. security ...

Be it resolved ...

The American Legion urges Congress to approve funding to harden and protect the deteriorating U.S. power grid, such action being necessary for continued defense should an electromagnetic pulse attack on the United States occur.

Passed, American Legion National Executive Committee Fall Meeting (virtual), Oct. 14-15, 2020

10,698 Books sent to children of U.S. military personnel around the world in 2021 thanks to a \$31,000 American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grant to United Through Reading, which promotes literacy and builds bonds through reading between kids and deployed parents



Photo courtesy United Through Reading

100 Miles challenge recruits police agencies



For this year's 100 Miles for Hope, American Legion members are engaging their local law-enforcement agencies, creating teams for a friendly competition to raise money for the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation (V&CF).

Registration fees and donations from 100 Miles for Hope go to V&CF, which funds programs that support disabled veterans and military families facing financial hardships.

Anyone who registers for the challenge can join and support teams such as the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, New York Police Post 460 or others. To learn more, visit legion.org/100miles.

"Our post is in, and we're excited about starting. We're challenging New York City and Los Angeles police departments, and all police agencies, to get out and support our veterans. And what's great about 100 Miles for Hope is that it also serves as a way we can improve our own health and fitness."



Photo courtesy Ernie Bille

Ernie Bille, Army veteran and member of American Legion Star Post 309 in California. He is actively recruiting participants from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, including Sheriff Alex Villanueva (above).



Photo courtesy Wilem Wong

"This is all about rallying people together, like a rally point in the military. Our enduring mission is to support our fellow veterans the best we can, and a way to show support is for us to drive donations to the Veterans & Children Foundation."

Wilem Wong, Army veteran and member of American Legion Post 1291 in New York City. Wong, who retired from the NYPD as a sergeant a year ago, is recruiting officers from American Legion NYPD Post 460, fellow New York City Legionnaires and others to join this year's 100 Miles for Hope challenge.



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SHARE YOUR KOREAN WAR STORIES

The American Legion Media & Communications Division is calling on Legion Family members to share their Korean War stories. Similar to a collection of more than 120 stories and photos called "Our WWII Story" that was published on **legion.org** between 2019 and 2021, "Our Korean War Story" will include:

- Personal accounts from Korean War veterans, Legionnaires, family members, post namesakes and others connected to the organization
- Local post efforts to support the troops during the Korean War and remember the sacrifices of the war afterward
- Community activities that honor Korean War veterans
- Stories and photos of unique equipment, artifacts and other memorabilia from the war

Submit materials at **legion.org/legiontown** under the category "Our Korean War Story." Once approved, they will be posted on the site, which offers easy social media sharing. From



those, pieces will be highlighted in American Legion e-newsletters, and selected submissions in a future issue of *The American Legion Magazine*.

In addition, staff writers and editors will work with national library staff to resurface American Legion responses and messages from that period of U.S. wartime history. The aim of this project is to ensure and strengthen historical memory, while veterans of the Korean War – 361,749 of whom have been American Legion members in the past decade – are available to share firsthand accounts.

\$3,002,140

Amount in emergency aid provided directly to veterans in need from local American Legion post funds in 2020-2021, with just 62% of posts reporting

8

New Sons of The American Legion squadrons chartered in February

6,395

American Legion posts that led local Memorial Day events in 2021, with only 62% of posts reporting

Two years of Tango

The American Legion Tango Alpha Lima podcast celebrated its two-year anniversary April 1. Among the highlights from the first two years:

► **2** Awards for the podcast's ambitious 20-20-20 series commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. In March, PRNEWS' Nonprofit Awards named Tango Alpha Lima one of two "honorable mentions" in the podcast category. Just one overall winner was selected in the annual international competition. Last December, the podcast won the Indiana Society of Association Executives' Innovation Award.

► **118** Episodes published in the first two years

► **158%** Increase in audio downloads in February 2022, compared with a year earlier

► **12,098** Audio downloads in September 2021, the highest monthly total

► **85,623** Total audio downloads as of March 28

A new Tango Alpha Lima podcast is published every Tuesday morning. Audio and video versions are available on major podcast-hosting sites and at **legion.org/tangoalphalima**.





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The power of walking

Adding walking to your routine improves your physical and mental health, experts say. Regular walking supports a healthy immune system, boosts your metabolism and strengthens your joints, muscles and bones. It also helps relieve stress.

Daily walking increases metabolism by burning extra calories and preventing muscle loss, which is particularly important as we age. You may even notice your pants start to loosen around your midsection, even if the number on the scale isn't moving much. That's because regular walking can help reduce abdominal fat and, as a result, improve your body's response to insulin.

Experts recommend walking at least 30 minutes daily for the greatest benefits. Here are a couple of ways to get the most out of it:

Mix in intervals Intervals, defined as short spurts with a quicker pace or going up hills, are key in getting the most out of walking. Increasing your speed for small segments of time during a 30-minute walk allows you to burn more calories than if you strolled at a moderate pace the whole time. It also benefits your cardiorespiratory system.

Try warming up with an easy walk for three minutes. Then spend 25 minutes alternating between one minute of walking at a moderate pace and one minute of brisk walking. Cool down with an easy walk for two minutes.

Explore nature Taking walks outdoors has several benefits, too. Exposure to the sun's natural vitamin D helps protect the brain's neurons and reduces inflammation. Breathing natural air, rather than recycled air indoors, improves brain function. And the stimulation caused by the activity and nature produce endorphins that regulate your mood.

Army veteran Jennifer Campbell is a certified personal trainer with a master's degree in nutrition education. She is commander of the California American Legion's 24th District.

Walk 100 miles, a step at a time

The American Legion's third annual 100 Miles for Hope challenge is underway. Walking just 30 minutes a day is one way to complete the mileage part of the challenge. For details and registration, visit legion.org/100miles.



Media Bakery

14% VA health-care services provided virtually in 2019

58% VA health-care services provided virtually by mid-2020

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'A barometer of life'

Media Bakery

Be proactive in managing blood pressure.

BY LANCE FRAZER

High blood pressure (hypertension) can lead to life-threatening conditions, including heart failure, arrhythmia, chronic kidney disease, blindness, Alzheimer's and dementia. Every year, it is the primary or contributing cause of death for more than 500,000 people in the United States alone.

Hypertension is the increased force of blood against the arterial walls, and can be caused by smoking, alcohol, a sedentary lifestyle, and a diet high in salt, sugar, or processed foods containing high levels of trans fats or saturated fats, according to Mayo Clinic cardiologist Michael Meyers. While typically increasing and decreasing throughout the day, blood pressure consistently above normal is a red flag. Called "the silent killer," hypertension often develops without symptoms, and by the time they are exhibited treatment may be too late.

Typically, "if that top number (systolic, measurement of pressure in arteries during heartbeat) gets above 120, or the bottom (diastolic, heart at rest) goes above 80, we begin to see the disease manifest," says Willie Lawrence, an American Heart Association cardiologist.

"Blood pressure is a barometer of life. While there is some genetic predisposition, it comes back to what you eat, whether you're obese, if you don't walk or get other exercise daily, if your life places you under regular stress and you don't deal with that. Those are the factors to watch and control."

Hypertension is perceived as a disease of aging, but according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics, an estimated one in 25 people ages 12 to 19 have hypertension. The CDC recommends blood pressure checks starting at 3, along with a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight and regular physical activity to protect children and young adults.

If hypertension is caught at an early age, it is more likely to be controllable but will still require lifelong monitoring, Meyers says. While there are some promising treatments on the horizon, "prevention, via a healthy, active lifestyle, is so much preferable to having to react."

Lance Frazer is a California-based freelance writer specializing in health and medicine, science, nature and the environment.

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5 great city destinations

Enjoy some of America's most historic vacation spots. BY LYN METTLER

Haven't decided where to travel this summer? Think about visiting one of these five U.S. cities, which amaze with breathtaking landscapes and patriotic history.

San Diego This Southern California city has a large military presence, meaning veterans can expect a warm welcome. One of San Diego's most popular attractions is the USS *Midway* Museum, located on the aircraft carrier in San Diego Bay. Other popular attractions include San Diego Air & Space Museum in Balboa Park, the San Diego Zoo, SeaWorld San Diego and LEGOLAND California. There are plenty of outdoor activities, too, from kayaking through sea caves in La Jolla to hiking at Torrey Pines State Reserve. Don't miss Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, overlooking the Pacific on Point Loma.

Colorado Springs, Colo. Gaze on some of America's most beautiful scenery in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Explore Pikes Peak, which inspired a poem later adapted for the song "America the Beautiful," and hike among the red rock formations of Garden of the Gods Park. As for human-made attractions, the state's most visited is the Air Force Academy's 150-foot interfaith Cadet Chapel.

Headed to the Destin-Fort Walton Beach area? See the new Women Veterans Memorial, featuring eight statues of women who made significant contributions to U.S. military history.

Philadelphia Return to our nation's roots in Philadelphia, home to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. Other spots to visit include portions of the Underground Railroad, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial along the Delaware River and Korean War Memorial Park. Snap a photo with the famous "Rocky" statue at the bottom of the stairs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

San Antonio One of the nation's fastest-growing cities, San Antonio is home to the Alamo, site of the 1836 battle for Texan independence from Mexico. Stroll or enjoy a boat ride on the famous River Walk, lined with cafes, restaurants and shops. There's also Market Square, the country's largest Mexican market, and San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, a World Heritage Site that preserves four of the five Spanish colonial missions. Veterans Memorial Plaza in downtown San Antonio is home to several memorials, including "Hill-881 South," a massive bronze sculpture honoring those who served in Vietnam.

Oahu, Hawaii Southwest now offers affordable flights to the Hawaiian Islands from many West Coast cities. Soak up the sun on Waikiki Beach, or book a week at Disney's Aulani resort on the quieter side of the island. Tourists can ride on the historic Hawaiian Railway, hike the Diamond Head volcanic crater or attend a luau. And no trip is complete without a visit to the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, which includes two museums and the USS *Arizona*, USS *Utah* and USS *Oklahoma* memorials.

Lyn Mettler is a freelance travel writer who blogs at gototravelgal.com.



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LEFT: Police cordon off a perimeter around the blast radius of a residential area heavily damaged by Russian bombardment in Podilskyi district in Kyiv, Ukraine, on March 18.

Marcus Yam / Los Angeles Times via Getty

A Senseless War

Putin's invasion of Ukraine has triggered massive economic and geopolitical consequences for Russia - and the world.

BY ALAN W. DOWD

Editor's note: The following analysis of Russia's Ukraine invasion was last updated in late March as this issue of *The American Legion Magazine* neared press time. Events in Ukraine and in Europe are likely to have changed greatly, but the moments in history that led up to the invasion remain.

Vladimir Putin's criminal invasion of Ukraine has opened a new chapter in Europe's blood-soaked history, reawakened the free world to threats on its doorstep, and raised a number of questions for a United States largely preoccupied with domestic concerns.

What caused this war? Putin believes the collapse of the USSR was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the (20th) century." This is evidence of Putin's commitment not to Soviet communism but to Russian imperialism, for which the USSR was a vehicle. Thus, Putin laments the loss of Russian control over Soviet territories (Ukraine, Georgia, the Baltics), the loss of an East European buffer zone (embodied by the Warsaw Pact) and the loss of Moscow's international stature. Putin wants to reacquire those trappings of the Russian Empire. Ukraine and NATO stand in the way of that.

While Putin has long been considered a mentally balanced, if ruthless, actor on the world stage, his views on Ukraine's sovereignty and NATO's expansion suggest he's drifted into fantasy.

Putin claims NATO expansion violated post-Cold War agreements. Yet none other than Mikhail Gorbachev counters that the topic of NATO expansion "was not discussed at all" as the Cold War thawed.



The motorized infantry of the Wehrmacht advances into Soviet Ukraine during the German invasion in 1941. Getty

Ukraine's hard history

Modern Ukraine traces its history at least to the mid-9th century, when the Kievan state emerged along the Dnieper River. At various times, the region was ruled by Lithuania, Poland, Cossack tribes, the Ottoman Empire, the Hapsburg Monarchy, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. These eras were sprinkled with brief periods of independence.

Ukrainians endured beastly violence at the hands of the Soviets, Nazis and then the Soviets again. In 1954, with both Russia and Ukraine part of the Soviet Union, the Crimean peninsula was transferred by Soviet strongman Nikita Khrushchev to Ukraine as a "gift."

Ukraine's parliament declared independence Aug. 24, 1991. A national referendum was held Dec. 1, 1991, with 90% of the country voting for independence. Ukraine's independence was recognized by Russia (Dec. 8, 1991), the United States (Dec. 25, 1991) and the European Community (Dec. 31, 1991).



Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky addresses the nation from Kyiv on March 17. Photo by Ukrainian Presidency / Handout / Anadolu Agency via Getty

Putin blames NATO for “aggressive actions” against Russia. Yet before his 2014 invasion of Ukraine, the United States deactivated the North Atlantic-focused 2nd Fleet (2011) and Germany-based V Corps (2012). In 2013, Washington withdrew every U.S. tank from Europe, and Britain began shutting down its Germany garrison. By 2014, Germany had just 300 tanks – down from 2,125.

This wasn’t enough for Putin. So, he demanded that NATO rewind history and roll back the only institution capable of providing security in Europe.

Putin complains that the USSR’s collapse left “historically Russian territories with a historically Russian population, primarily in Ukraine ... outside Russia.” He also claims Ukraine’s government is run by Nazis, believes Ukraine was “completely created by Russia” and accuses Ukraine of “stockpiling the latest weapons ... imagine how Russia must live.”

These assertions would be laughable if Ukraine’s cities weren’t razed – and people bludgeoned – because of Putin’s fantasy history. Ukraine’s independence and sovereignty have been internationally recognized since 1991, including by Russia. Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelensky, is Jewish; his grandfather fought the Nazi invasion of Ukraine. And it’s Russia that invaded Ukraine – twice.

After Putin’s 2014 annexation of Crimea and assault on eastern Ukraine, Kyiv received defensive weapons (too little and too late, it turns out). What Putin fails to grasp is that trying to deter aggression doesn’t constitute aggression.

“Such aid is not an act of war,” as President Franklin D.

Ukraine’s Churchillian leader

A comedian turned president, Volodymyr Zelensky was widely considered a lightweight before the invasion. But Zelensky has emerged as a heroic leader for his countrymen, an inspiration to the free world and a skillful communicator. It’s no exaggeration to say that Ukraine held up – and NATO helped out – because Zelensky stood his ground. As Russia invaded, Zelensky was offered a chance to evacuate. His response: “The fight is here. I need ammunition, not a ride.”

Indeed, Zelensky sounds positively Churchillian at times. “It will be our faces you see, not our backs,” he declared as Russia invaded. To Britain’s Parliament, Zelensky intoned, “We will fight till the end – at sea, in the air ... in the forests, in the fields, on the shores, in the streets.”

To Congress, he described living through “a terror that Europe has not seen for 80 years,” invoked Pearl Harbor and 9/11, and explained that Ukraine “experiences the same every day.”

Whether Zelensky is killed, leads a guerrilla insurgency, forms a government in exile or oversees Ukraine’s reconstruction, he’s secured a place alongside other wartime leaders under imminent threat: Judah Maccabee, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill.

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Roosevelt said, “even if a dictator should unilaterally proclaim it so to be.”

Russia has a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1.7 trillion, a 1.4 million-man military, a \$61.7 billion military budget and 4,500 nuclear warheads. Ukraine has a \$153 billion GDP, less than 300,000 military personnel, a \$5.9 billion defense budget and zero nuclear weapons. Ukraine surrendered its nuclear arsenal in 1994 in exchange for Russia’s commitment to respect Ukraine’s independence, sovereignty and existing borders.

Ukraine’s real sin against Putin was daring to expel pro-Putin leaders, planting democracy and turning to the West.

Why is NATO involved? Ukraine is not a member of NATO, which explains why the alliance hasn’t intervened directly. This is a harsh reminder that there are limits to NATO’s reach and role today, just as there were when Moscow sent tanks to crush Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968).

Yet even though Ukraine falls outside NATO’s protective umbrella, Putin’s war on Ukraine threatens what the North Atlantic Treaty calls the “stability and ... security of the North Atlantic area.” That explains NATO’s flurry of activity.

Washington has approved a long-delayed sale of 250 M1A2 tanks to Poland, surged an aircraft carrier to join Italian and French carriers in the northern Mediterranean, and sent warplanes to Britain, Germany, the Baltics, Poland and Romania. It’s also dispatched attack helicopters to the Baltics and Poland, moved Patriot batteries into Poland, and deployed troops to Poland, Germany, Latvia and Romania. As of late March, there are now 100,000 U.S. troops in Europe – the most since 2005.

Britain has deployed troops to Poland and Estonia, missile-defense systems to Poland, warships to the Black Sea and Mediterranean, and fighter-bombers to Romania and Poland. Canada and Germany have deployed hundreds of troops to reinforce contingents in the Baltics. France deployed troops to Romania. Germany and the Netherlands sent Patriot batteries to Slovakia. Denmark dispatched F-16s to

Ukraine’s global production

Ukraine – the ninth-largest wheat-producing country and sixth-largest corn-producing country – accounts for 10% of global wheat supply and 15% of global corn supply. Before the war, Ukraine accounted for an especially large share of wheat imports for the Philippines (15%), Egypt (15%), Morocco (20%), Thailand (26%), Indonesia (26%) and Tunisia (48%).

In addition, Ukraine is the world’s sixth-largest producer of iron ore, 13th-largest steel producer and 21st-largest nitrogen-fertilizer producer. Ukraine also is a major supplier of components for Volkswagen and BMW automobiles; production lines of both automakers have been affected by Putin’s war.

Lithuania. Dutch F-35s and Spanish Eurofighters are deploying to Bulgaria.

NATO has activated its rapid-response force for the first time in history, will likely convert rotational deployments in the Baltics into permanent bases, and could bring longtime neutrals Finland and Sweden into the fold.

Thanks to Putin, NATO is more united than at any time since 9/11 – and more needed than at any time since the Berlin Wall’s collapse.

How is NATO helping Ukraine? Before the war, the United States formed an airbridge to deliver weapons into Ukraine. NATO then shifted to overland deliveries. In the first week of war, NATO rushed 17,000 antitank weapons into Ukraine via overland routes.

The United States has shared intelligence and shipped 4,600 Javelin antitank systems, 7,000 light-antiarmor systems, 1,400 Stinger anti-aircraft systems, 100 Switchblade kamikaze drones, 300 grenade launchers, 6,200 machine guns, shotguns and rifles, and 60 million rounds of ammunition. Britain has delivered Starstreak air-defense systems and 3,615 NLAW antitank systems. The Baltic states have sent anti-aircraft and antitank systems, Poland anti-aircraft weapons, Turkey ground-attack drones, Germany antitank weapons and Stingers, Denmark antitank weapons.



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	\$5,000.00 Benefit		\$10,000.00 Benefit		\$15,000.00 Benefit		\$25,000.00 Benefit	
Age	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
64	\$33.50	\$24.55	\$66.00	\$48.10	\$98.50	\$71.65	\$163.50	\$118.75
65	\$34.75	\$25.50	\$68.50	\$50.00	\$102.25	\$74.50	\$169.75	\$123.50
66	\$35.90	\$26.35	\$70.80	\$51.70	\$105.70	\$77.05	\$175.50	\$127.75
67	\$37.05	\$27.25	\$73.10	\$53.50	\$109.15	\$79.75	\$181.25	\$132.25
68	\$38.70	\$28.95	\$76.40	\$56.90	\$114.10	\$84.85	\$189.50	\$140.75
69	\$39.75	\$30.60	\$78.50	\$60.20	\$117.25	\$89.80	\$194.75	\$149.00
70	\$43.85	\$32.45	\$86.70	\$63.90	\$129.55	\$95.35	\$215.25	\$158.25
71	\$45.60	\$34.25	\$90.20	\$67.50	\$134.80	\$100.75	\$224.00	\$167.25
72	\$47.70	\$36.00	\$94.40	\$71.00	\$141.10	\$106.00	\$234.50	\$176.00
73	\$50.90	\$38.95	\$100.80	\$76.90	\$150.70	\$114.85	\$250.50	\$190.75
74	\$53.50	\$41.85	\$106.00	\$82.70	\$158.50	\$123.55	\$263.50	\$205.25

For available ages not shown, call for rate quote.

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*All benefits paid would be less any outstanding loan.

Ukraine is distributing those weapons to 209,000 active-duty personnel, 60,000 National Guardsmen, a Territorial Defense Force of 100,000 volunteers, and an army of citizen-soldiers numbering into the hundreds of thousands. Plus, 20,000 foreigners – including U.S. veterans – have joined the International Legion for the Defense of Ukraine.

Though the front appears stalemated at this writing, Putin's ruthlessness and Russia's sheer mass could secure a battlefield victory, albeit a pyrrhic one. Yet even in a Putin-occupied rump Ukraine, the weapons will keep flowing, and the Ukrainian people will keep fighting in what would be a well-funded guerrilla insurgency. America has a playbook for such an insurgency: 15,000 Soviet troops died trying to occupy Afghanistan.

What about sanctions? NATO, the EU, Japan, and Australia have disconnected Russian banks from the system that enables financial transfers across 200 countries, and unleashed sanctions against Putin and his oligarch henchmen. They've also enacted export-control measures blocking access to high-tech products. Even neutral Switzerland froze Russian assets. Most of the free world has closed airspace to Russian aircraft. Russian cargo ships and yachts have been seized. And 375 multinational firms and organizations have ceased operations in Russia: the NHL and WWE, FIFA and F1, Shell and ExxonMobil, American Airlines and United Airlines, Pepsi and Coke, FedEx and UPS, VW and Mercedes, Ford and GM, Honda and Toyota, IBM and Apple, Visa and MasterCard, Germany's DeutschBank and China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

This barrage of financial counterstrikes – what France's finance minister calls “all-out economic and financial war on Russia” – has shuttered the Russian stock market and left it “un-investable,” sent the ruble plummeting to less than a penny against the dollar and shoved Russia toward foreign-debt default. Economists project Russia's GDP will shrink 10% to 20% this year.

Washington's decision to block Russian oil was an important salvo in this financial war. Next, Washington should unleash America's vast

energy endowment – 264 billion barrels of oil reserves, 327 trillion cubic-feet of Outer Continental Shelf natural gas, 3 trillion barrels of oil-shale – and flood the market. As Gen. Martin Dempsey, former Joint Chiefs chairman, observes, Washington must view “energy as an instrument of national power.” That would require the administration to rethink its rigid commitment to climate-change goals.

Is this the beginning of Cold War II? Putin's unprovoked attack on Ukraine marks a turning point. While it's not a perfect parallel, Cold War-type divisions have reemerged, as a bloc of tyrant regimes – Russia, China, Iran, North Korea – openly, violently challenges the international order built by freedom-loving nations. To contain this axis of tyrants – and to keep Cold War II from turning hotter – the free world must invest more in deterrent military strength.

The United States spends 3.2% of GDP on defense, yet the Cold War average was more than twice that. New generations of Americans – those with no memory of cold wars or world wars – will soon learn that government's primary duty is to provide “security against foreign danger,” as James Madison wrote.

Toward that end, Germany is lifting military outlays to 2% of GDP (something NATO has been urging since 2006), almost doubling defense spending by next year, and creating a massive \$112.7 billion rearmament fund. Thrust to the frontlines of Cold War II, Poland's defense budget will jump to 3% of GDP next year – a 20% spike in just one year. Britain, Italy, the Baltics, the Netherlands, Denmark and France also are increasing defense spending.

America's Indo-Pacific allies are a step ahead: South Korea's defense budget is 64% larger (as a share of GDP) than that of European NATO. Japan has increased defense spending 10 consecutive years and is deploying aircraft carriers. Australia is boosting defense spending by 40% and is deploying nuclear-powered submarines. Taiwan just approved its largest-ever defense budget.

Putin's war offers a glimpse of what lies ahead if Xi Jinping tries to seize Taiwan. Hopefully,

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Ukraine's tenacious response will give Beijing pause – and Taipei a roadmap. Xi must understand that attempting in Taiwan what Putin has done in Ukraine would lead not to victory parades and an ascendant legacy, but to his soldiers in body bags, his military in tatters, his international standing wrecked.

What lies ahead for Putin? Putin has catastrophically underestimated his enemies and overestimated himself.

Putin demanded NATO's pullback from Eastern Europe, Ukraine's demilitarization and Zelensky's removal. When NATO and Ukraine rejected Putin's diktat, he ordered his cold-blooded invasion, expecting a lightning two-day war and swift installation of a puppet regime. Neither has come to pass.

From the Baltics to Bulgaria, NATO is bolstering its easternmost members. At this writing, Ukraine has stalemated – perhaps checkmated – Putin. Indeed, the draft ceasefire requires Russia's withdrawal to prewar positions, leaves Zelensky in power, and concedes Ukraine's sovereignty and independence. Ukraine won't be joining NATO, nor will it be demilitarized. Instead, Ukraine will be neutral in name but not in practice, embracing the bristly self-defense posture of Israel or Sweden – likely within the EU.

U.S. intelligence concludes 7,000 Russian troops have been killed in four weeks – more than America lost in Iraq and Afghanistan in 20 years. Ten percent of deployed Russian equipment has been destroyed or captured, including 564 tanks and armored vehicles and dozens of aircraft.

The Russian military's disastrous showing – the combined-arms ineptitude, the logistics debacle, the abysmal morale, the beastly war crimes, the failure to achieve air superiority (let alone air supremacy), the underfed soldiers, the fired generals, the dead generals – has shattered the myth that Putin is a master strategist two moves ahead of his opponents. He's a gambler who was on a hot streak, pushed his luck, rolled the dice and lost. Might Georgia or Moldova now move against Russian forces on their territory? Whatever the answer, Putin's senseless war

carries significant military consequences, perhaps as far-reaching as Moscow's invasion of Afghanistan.

Equally troubling for Putin is the cascade of economic and geopolitical consequences triggered by his war. As noted, the economic costs for Putin's subjects and kleptocrat cronies may prove incalculable. Government-imposed sanctions could ease after a ceasefire. But in this era when businesses are highly sensitive to customers' political sentiments, many corporations will steer clear of a Putin-controlled Russia. So toxic is Putin that Beijing's ties to his regime have battered stock values of Chinese firms.

As to the geopolitical consequences: Russia faces a level of isolation beyond anything the USSR – with its satellites and proxies – ever endured. Moreover, Putin's war exposed the dramatic reversal of the Moscow-Beijing relationship. Once the unchallenged ruler and vanguard of a vast communist imperium, Moscow is now the groveling subordinate.

Michael McFaul, former U.S. ambassador to Russia, believes the invasion of Ukraine "marks the beginning of the end of Putin's dictatorship." Russia's oligarchs, spymasters, generals and citizens could hasten that end; recall that Russians killed Czar Nicholas II after the Great War overwhelmed the Russian Empire. Italians strung up Mussolini after years of criminal war. The Soviets removed Khrushchev not long after his Cuba gamble nearly triggered World War III. Argentines prosecuted members of Argentina's military government after the Falklands disaster. Serbs delivered Milosevic to a war-crimes tribunal after he turned the Balkans into a graveyard.

Reportedly, there are pockets of antiwar protests in Russia, and some oligarchs have publicly opposed Putin's war. However, the oligarchs' words have no effect. The protests aren't large enough to paralyze Putin. And whether the oligarchs or the people move against Putin, they will need help from the spies and the generals. 🌿

Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow with the Sagamore Institute Center for America's Purpose.

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TO HONOR VETERANS THEY DIDN'T KNOW

Every veteran should be remembered. It was that thought by a veteran-owned funeral home in Elgin, Ill., that sparked an idea. The idea and a local newspaper story helped bring together hundreds of community members in January 2020 to honor an Air Force veteran they had never met.

John James Murphy, 71, had died a month earlier at the River View Rehab Center in Elgin. He had no known family or friends. A Vietnam veteran, he had lived in Elgin for 20 years.

The rehab center, the coroner and Symonds-Madison Funeral Home searched for any relatives. None were found.

Funeral director Dan Symonds, himself a veteran, had encountered this before; he usually had the veteran cremated and served as sole witness as the remains were taken to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

This time, his wife Joy decided to reach out to the *Daily Herald* newspaper to see if a story might draw some attention to a public visitation she had planned, thinking that Murphy must have some friends somewhere after living in the community for so long. She didn't want him sent off alone.

Aside from a nurse from the rehab center, nobody at the visitation had ever met Murphy. But he certainly wasn't alone.

"We like to say he gained 600 new friends that day," Joy Symonds said.

The story by the *Herald's* Elena Ferrarin quickly went viral. Four days after it ran, hundreds of people attended the visitation on a frigid Wednesday morning. Hundreds more made the 90-minute drive to the cemetery in Elwood.

I covered the funeral with Elena. She handled the words while I took pictures and shot video. It



Daily Herald photographer Rick West and writer Elena Ferrarin produced a 2020 series on funerals for “unclaimed veterans” that won The American Legion’s 2021 Fourth Estate Award.

LEFT PAGE: A woman places a flower during a graveside service for Navy veteran Doug Henke; American Legion Post 57 honor guard members fire a rifle volley; attendees stand at attention and salute at Henke’s service.

ABOVE: Harvest Christian Academy wrestling coach Shawn Ayers, left, brings members of his team to the funeral for Ronald “Ron” George Olson; veterans pause at the casket of a man they would not allow to be forgotten; active-duty troops carry the casket for Vietnam War Air Force veteran John James Murphy.

Newspaper’s award-winning work captures the essence of veteran fellowship.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RICK WEST

was one of the most moving experiences of my career. The thought of going through an entire life – a life that included the siblinghood of service to one’s country – only to die alone, was heartbreaking.

Yet the community I cover came together to honor a man they didn’t know. All they knew was that when it was time, Murphy served his country. And now it was their time to serve him.

Members of Elgin American Legion Post 57 attended, as did members of the local VFW. We also talked to many people who weren’t veterans but came to honor a man who experienced what their parents or grandparents experienced in Vietnam, and they couldn’t stand the thought of them being forgotten.

I covered four more “unclaimed veteran” funerals that year – a couple with Elena, a couple on my own. The work was rewarding; the pictures

were powerful, and the people who came out to honor veterans they had never met proved that community doesn’t just mean people who live in the same place. It means fellowship.

That said, I would prefer never to cover another one. We should all hope that every person, especially veterans who have given so much of themselves to others, leaves this earth knowing they’re not forgotten. 🌿

Rick West, staff photographer for the Daily Herald in suburban Chicago, accepted The American Legion’s prestigious Fourth Estate Award for print journalism at the 102nd National Convention last August in Phoenix. He and Daily Herald writer Elena Ferrarin teamed up for a series of articles, videos and photos in 2020 on memorial services for veterans who die with no family, other than their fellow veterans, to remember them and their service to the nation.



Brazilian-born U.S. citizen Tony Kanaan, who won the Indianapolis 500 in 2013, drove the American Legion-sponsored car to 10th place in the “greatest spectacle in racing” last year, and competed on oval tracks throughout the 2021 NTT INDYCAR Series while former NASCAR superstar Jimmie Johnson drove road courses for the Legion in the 48 car of Chip Ganassi Racing.

Johnson, who is racing on road courses and oval tracks alike in 2022, and Kanaan are joined by last year’s series champion, Alex Palou, in support of The American Legion for the 500 and throughout the current season. The Legion is primary sponsor of Kanaan’s car in the 500, with a new livery set to be unveiled in May.

At a press conference prior to the 2021 race, Kanaan helped announce the Legion’s focus on reducing and preventing veteran suicide. “We’re ready to fight this,” Kanaan told the media. “We’re ready to help The American Legion. Whatever we can do to send a message.”

The American Legion was recently named an official charity of INDYCAR, opening the door for more drivers to learn about the Legion and how to support veterans. The agreement “will help to accelerate the Legion’s goals through various promotions, and we hope Legionnaires everywhere will join our team and follow our exciting series,” said Mark Miles, president and CEO of Penske Entertainment Corp., which owns

INDYCAR and the NTT INDYCAR Series. “The American Legion performs an incredibly vital role for our veterans, for whose service and sacrifice we’re eternally grateful.”

“Last year, we successfully increased awareness of our mission among race fans nationally,” American Legion Chief Marketing Officer Dean Kessel said after the partnership was formed. “Now we have to build relationships with race fans locally and ask for their support of our efforts to help veterans.

“We might bring a driver to a post one night, and that will enable them to do a fundraiser or membership drive. Another example – at each race, we will reward a lucky member or donor with a trip to Victory Lane, which is an experience you can’t really get anywhere else. These are just a couple of ways you’ll see this partnership come to life. There will be much more, especially in the month of May and at the Indianapolis 500.”

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David Plumier



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Left behind

Tens of thousands of Afghan interpreters, families are in peril as U.S. bureaucracies quibble over process.

BY KEN OLSEN

A Marine assists an Afghan woman and her child as they browse through donated clothing at Fort Pickett in Blackstone, Va., Dec. 16. Getty

Tens of thousands of interpreters and their families remain trapped in Afghanistan in the absence of evacuation flights or access to U.S. visas and other documents that would give them a chance of reaching safety.

Large numbers are also fleeing Afghanistan, creating a massive refugee crisis in neighboring countries, says Margaret Stock, a leading immigration attorney and retired Army officer. Many will be deported back to Afghanistan, where they are at great risk of being executed by the Taliban.

“People’s lives are at stake because they worked for the U.S. government,” says Stock, a member of American Legion Jack Henry Post 1 in Anchorage, Alaska. “Their whole family is in danger. We have a moral obligation to get them out of there.”

The situation will only get worse as famine and Taliban retribution intensify. Veterans, refugee advocates and immigration attorneys are calling on the Biden administration to take swift, decisive action.

“If there’s one thing that needs to happen, it’s for the administration to commit to getting U.S. allies out of Afghanistan,” says Sunil Varghese, policy director of the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP).

The American Legion has pressed Congress for years to ensure Afghan and Iraqi interpreters can safely come to the United States. “Our wartime allies saved countless American lives and directly contributed to every level of tactical, operational

and strategic success during the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan,” states Resolution No. 16, passed by the Legion’s National Executive Committee in October 2018.

The crisis is partially rooted in the long-troubled Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, created over a decade ago to give Afghan and Iraqi interpreters who worked with the U.S. military a more direct way to immigrate to the United States.

“The whole program was doomed to failure,” Stock says. “It involves three agencies – the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense – and no one is in charge.” It takes years to approve SIV applications that are supposed to be processed in nine months. In addition, the State Department didn’t want SIVs to leave the country, taking the position they were supposed to stay and fight the Taliban, Stock says.

DoD also didn’t follow some well-established procedures for noncombat evacuations, including working with other U.S. government agencies to compile a comprehensive list of everyone who needed to be evacuated. As a result, the U.S. military tried to create lists on the fly, and more than the half the people who should have been evacuated were left behind. “We taught classes on how to evacuate people from countries when I was an instructor at the Combined Armed Services and Staff School and Command and General Staff College,” Stock says. “That institutional knowledge went to waste.”

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The Pentagon says the criticism is unwarranted given the sudden collapse of the Afghan government and military and the resulting security problems in Kabul.

“Despite these unprecedented challenges, U.S. forces, alongside our allies and partners, were able to evacuate more than 124,000 at-risk personnel aboard 778 airlifts at an average of one departure every 45 minutes – all with zero cancellations due to maintenance, fuel or logistics issues,” says Maj. Rob Lodewick, a DoD spokesman. “While far from the ‘perfect’ Noncombatant Evacuation Operation scenario taught at school houses, executing the largest airlift in U.S. history over the course of just 17 days does not happen without the development, refinement and execution of the very ‘well-established procedures’ and operational plans.”

Yet, IRAP, the Association of Wartime Allies and other organizations say they repeatedly asked the Biden administration to begin evacuating interpreters and other Afghans who worked with the U.S. government before the president’s spring 2021 announcement that all U.S. troops would withdraw by September. Now, the majority of an estimated 100,000 SIV applicants and family members remain in Afghanistan, as well as civil service workers, women’s rights activists, religious and ethnic minorities, and other at-risk Afghans, says IRAP attorney Adam Bates.

At the same time, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is denying scores of humanitarian parole applications, a status that would allow Afghan SIV applicants and their families to come to the United States for two years while they work to secure permanent residency. “Somebody flipped a switch after the (August) evacuations stopped, basically telling people in Afghanistan, ‘We don’t care about you anymore. You need to stay in place and die,’” Stock says.

USCIS says it typically receives fewer than 2,000 humanitarian parole applications a year and approves between 500 and 700 of those requests. Since July 1, USCIS has received more than 44,500 humanitarian parole requests from Afghan nationals alone. As of late December, the agency had denied 2,250 Afghan requests and conditionally approved 200.

Meanwhile, Afghan SIV and humanitarian parole applicants who fled to other countries face

deportation back to Afghanistan as they deal with squabbles between the State Department and USCIS, Stock says. She helped 17 members of an Afghan medical student’s family obtain humanitarian parole late last summer. But they were not able to reach Kabul to pick up the documents necessary to board a flight to the United States before the embassy closed.

The State Department told the family they could get their boarding documents from a U.S. embassy in another country, and they took great risks to get to Pakistan. In the ensuing months, the State Department told them USCIS had to verify their humanitarian parole status was still valid, Stock says. And USCIS told the family the State Department first had to send an email requesting that information. “These people’s lives are at stake, and these agencies are fighting over who has to send an email. It’s morally reprehensible.”

USCIS finally reaffirmed it had granted humanitarian parole to the 17 family members, and they went to the U.S. Consulate in Islamabad to get boarding documents for their flights. But the State Department sent the family back their passports in February without the boarding documents and is denying their request to seek refuge in the United States. “This is truly awful,” Stock says.

The State Department and USCIS say they cannot comment on specific cases. However, the State Department says it’s looking for alternative ways to process qualified SIV applications, given the embassy in Afghanistan is closed and it’s extremely difficult for Afghans to reach U.S. consular services in other countries where they can complete the part of the process that must be conducted in person.

Meanwhile, Ramish Darwishi is a former interpreter who came to the United States in late 2020 after a long battle to obtain an SIV. He cannot find anyone to discuss options for getting his starving family out of Afghanistan after the Taliban executed his older brother. “No one cares,” says Darwishi, who worked with the U.S. military in Afghanistan for eight years. “I’m thinking, every second, that Taliban will kill my family.” 🌿

Ken Olsen is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.



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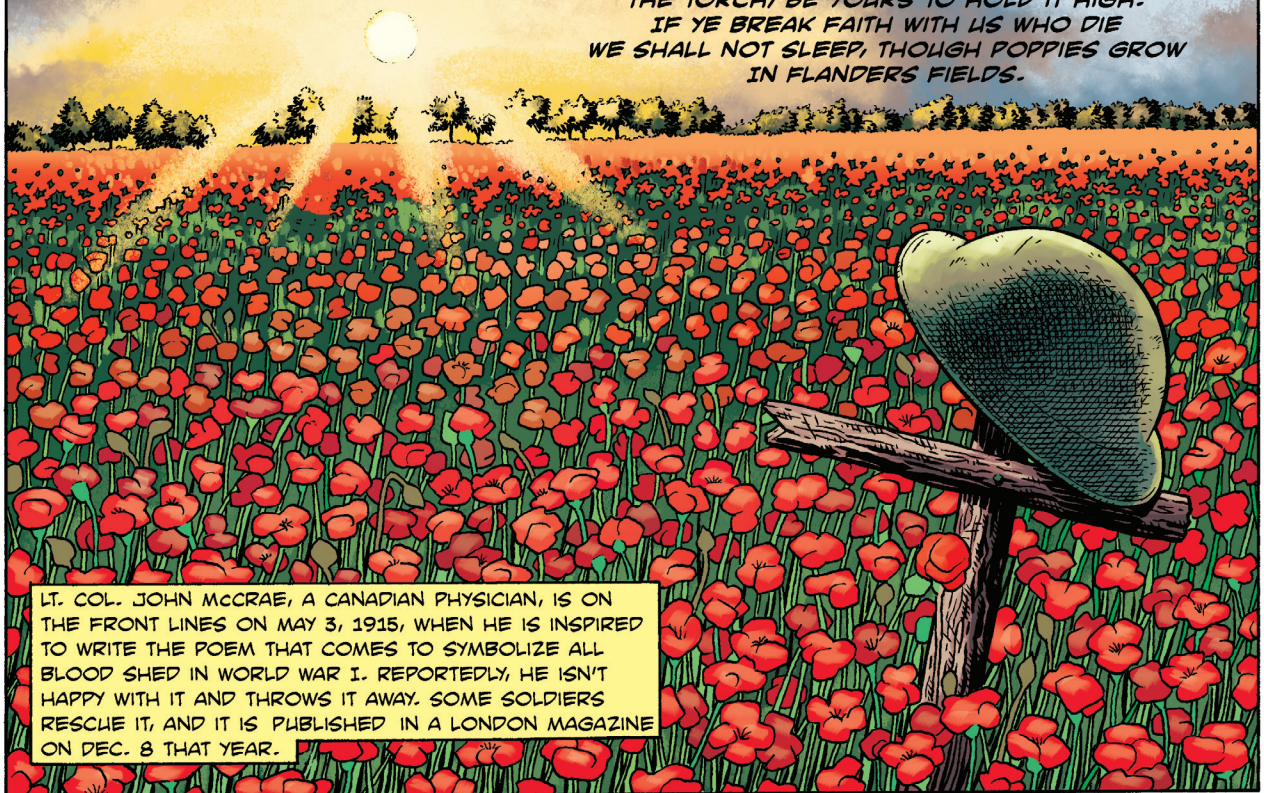
LORE OF THE LEGION

STORY: JEFF STOFFER
ART: GARY MARTIN
COLOR: MARCUS ESKOW
EDITOR: AUGUST UHL

IN FLANDERS FIELDS THE POPPIES BLOW
BETWEEN THE CROSSES, ROW ON ROW,
THAT MARK OUR PLACE; AND IN THE SKY
THE LARKS, STILL BRAVELY SINGING, FLY
SCARCE HEARD AMID THE GUNS BELOW.

WE ARE THE DEAD. SHORT DAYS AGO
WE LIVED, FELT DAWN, SAW SUNSET GLOW,
LOVED, AND WERE LOVED, AND NOW WE LIE
IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

TAKE UP OUR QUARREL WITH THE FOE;
TO YOU FROM FAILING HANDS WE THROW
THE TORCH; BE YOURS TO HOLD IT HIGH.
IF YE BREAK FAITH WITH US WHO DIE
WE SHALL NOT SLEEP, THOUGH POPPIES GROW
IN FLANDERS FIELDS.



LT. COL. JOHN MCCRAE, A CANADIAN PHYSICIAN, IS ON THE FRONT LINES ON MAY 3, 1915, WHEN HE IS INSPIRED TO WRITE THE POEM THAT COMES TO SYMBOLIZE ALL BLOOD SHED IN WORLD WAR I. REPORTEDLY, HE ISN'T HAPPY WITH IT AND THROWS IT AWAY. SOME SOLDIERS RESCUE IT, AND IT IS PUBLISHED IN A LONDON MAGAZINE ON DEC. 8 THAT YEAR.

AFTER THE 1918 ARMISTICE, NEW YORK PROFESSOR MOINA MICHAEL PROMOTES THE POEM AND THE RED POPPY'S MEANING IN AMERICA. SOON BECOMING KNOWN WORLDWIDE AS THE "POPPY LADY," SHE IS LATER FEATURED ON A 3-CENT U.S. POSTAGE STAMP.

ON SEPT. 27, 1920, THE AMERICAN LEGION DESIGNATES THE RED POPPY AS ITS OFFICIAL FLOWER. THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOLLOWS A YEAR LATER.



#45



LED BY THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY OVER THE DECADES, DISABLED VETERANS HELP ASSEMBLE CREPE-PAPER POPPIES FOR DISTRIBUTION IN RETURN FOR DONATIONS. TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ARE RAISED FOR FORMER MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES.

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For the ones who gave all,
WE REMEMBER.

The poppy is a symbol of remembrance for all who made the ultimate sacrifice in military service to our nation.

On Memorial Day, we join you in honoring each individual this red flower represents.



usaa.com/memorialday



Photo by TJ Kirkpatrick

Dillard presses Congress on Legion's key legislative issues

American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard addressed the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees March 8, highlighting critical veterans issues during the Legion's annual Washington Conference:

Toxic exposure Dillard urged government accountability and health benefits for Gulf War and post-9/11 veterans exposed to toxic fumes from burn pits in the Middle East. "Veterans who are suffering now cannot wait decades to receive care they need and rightfully deserve."

Buddy Check, suicide prevention The Legion's Buddy Check program assisted nearly a half-million veterans through local post outreach in 2020 and 2021. "Isolation is no friend to the veteran who may be confronting post-traumatic stress disorder, possibly at risk of suicide - and in need of connection with others who understand. A National Buddy Check Week can help bridge the gap between veterans in need and VA services to help them."

Citizenship through service As citizenship assistance programs disappear from military bases, this pathway to naturalization has been obstructed. Dillard reiterated the Legion's support for the Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act, which addresses naturalization during service and protects non-citizen veterans and their families from unwarranted deportation.

VA access for WWII vets As the largest ground war since World War II rages on European soil, it is dispiriting that there are World War II veterans who do not have access to VA health care, Dillard said. The Legion is working to correct this lapse with legislation pending in Congress. With fewer than 240,000 living, "time is running out."

- Mackenzie Wolf

The American Legion's Spring Meetings will be in Indianapolis May 2-5. Follow the latest news, and watch National Commander Paul E. Dillard's address to the National Executive Committee, at legion.org.

"It really changed the way that we connect veterans with the benefits they've earned. We've overcome a lot of challenges, and in many ways we've actually gotten better in the last couple of years."

VA Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Benefits Michael Frueh, speaking to the Legion's National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission about how the pandemic has affected the agency. In fiscal 2021, VA delivered more than \$110 billion in compensation, a new record.

"(The Legion is) a very special voice ... instrumental and essential in moving the Capitol to do the right thing and to keep our promises."

Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee

Spread the word about National Poppy Day

National Poppy Day is May 27. An updated web platform at legion.org/poppyday has resources for local use and education, including:



- A brief history of Poppy Day
- A Poppy Shop to purchase pins and supplies for posts, units, squadrons and chapters
- Downloadable ads, posters, flyers and other media
- A link to **#poppyday** social media hashtag images
- Links to make online donations to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation and American Legion Charities as part of Poppy Day activities

A detailed image of a US two-dollar bill. The bill features a portrait of Thomas Jefferson in the center. The serial number 'A 01872587 A' is printed in green ink on the left and right sides. The text 'TWO DOLLARS' is visible at the top and bottom. The Federal Reserve seal is on the left, and the Treasury seal is on the right. The signature of John W. Snow, Secretary of the Treasury, is at the bottom right. The bill is framed by a decorative border.

-

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Bright lights, big shade

More upgrades come to home of American Legion World Series.

Fans attending the 95th American Legion World Series this August will have cooler seating options during the day and better views at night thanks to upgrades at Veterans Field at Keeter Stadium.

Canopies over the grandstand seats are being extended down both baselines to provide more shade at the annual ALWS in Shelby, N.C. And stadium lights at Keeter Stadium are being replaced by LED lights.

The extended canopies will include large ceiling fans like the existing canopies.

The LED lights will help brighten the field for players, fans in the stands, and those watching at home on ESPN and ESPN3.

American Legion World Series Chairman Eddie Holbrook said the lights are similar to those used in pro stadiums such as Bank of America Stadium, home of the NFL's Carolina Panthers.



Photo by Andy Proffet

The \$2.2 million project is funded through a grant from the state's Department of Commerce. Holbrook credited North Carolina Speaker of the House Tim Moore, a lifelong resident of nearby Kings Mountain, for helping get the improvements funded.

Holbrook added that the project is a testament to the

ALWS' economic impact not only to Shelby and Cleveland counties, but to the region and state – over \$8.5 million locally and \$16 million regionally in 2018.

This year's stadium upgrades follow improvements made over the past two years, which include laser-grading of the field, new Bermuda sod for the field and bullpen, an improved irrigation and underground drainage system, a new outfield fence and more.

The 95th American Legion World Series is scheduled for Aug. 11-16.

– Andy Proffet

States with highest gas taxes, fees

As gasoline prices soar, remember that a healthy chunk of the pain at the pump comes from government taxes and fees. These are the 10 states with the highest state taxes and fees for gasoline:

- California** 68.5 cents per gallon
- Illinois** 59.6 cents per gallon
- Pennsylvania** 58.7 cents per gallon
- Hawaii** 51.69 cents per gallon
- New Jersey** 50.7 cents per gallon
- Nevada** 50.48 cents per gallon
- Indiana** 49.79 cents per gallon
- Washington** 49.4 cents per gallon
- New York** 48.22 cents per gallon
- Michigan** 45.17 cents per gallon
- Federal** 18.4 cents per gallon

Source: American Petroleum Institute

Find where your state ranks: api.org/oil-and-natural-gas/consumer-information/motor-fuel-taxes/gasoline-tax

MY GI BILL VETERANS & EDUCATION BY VALERIE HEFFNER

Internships and Post-9/11 benefits

Q: *I attend a university and will receive my education degree next year. My curriculum includes completing a term as a student teacher at a high school. Even though the class is six credits, I am required to teach a 40-hour week. Will I receive my monthly allowance? How will this affect my Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits?*

A: While completing the course, your school will certify your benefits a bit differently. The school will advise VA that you are enrolled in a six-credit class along with a 40-hour-per-week internship. When VA receives the enrollment information, it will pay your monthly housing allowance (MHA) at the higher rate, which is full-time. If for some reason you do not receive that full-time entitlement, contact your school's veterans adviser to ensure the correct information was provided.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. askvalerie@legion.org

911 to the rescue



Did you know the first call to 911 was placed in 1968? As **911.gov** details, before the advent of the universal emergency-call

number, Americans needed to dial local 10-digit phone numbers to reach police, fire or emergency services.

A 1966 report by the National Academy of Sciences highlighting the rise in accidental death and injury urged policymakers to explore the "feasibility of designating a single, nationwide, telephone number to summon an ambulance." Two years later, the first 911 call was placed in Haleyville, Ala.

Find out more at **911.gov**.

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¹Vaughan CP, Johnson TM 2nd, Goode PS, Redden DT, Burgio KL, Markland AD. Military exposure and urinary incontinence among American men. J Urol. 2014 Jan; 191(1):125-9. doi: 10.1016/j.juro.2013.07.016. Epub 2013 Jul 16. PMID: 23871759.

LT 70067 A

A grave problem

Engraved tombstones are in short supply, as the industry tries to work through problems caused by supply-chain issues, labor shortages, the departure of key stenciling firms from the market and, sadly, increased demand.

As the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal* reports, the backlog dates to the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, “when many tombstone makers weren’t designated ‘essential’ services and had to close.” The situation only worsened when 3M announced it would no longer produce the rubber adhesive stencils used in tombstone-carving.

3M cited “severely constrained raw material availability,” which had led to a massive increase in costs.



“Though the odds were set against them, the women of the Six Triple Eight processed millions of letters and packages during their deployment in Europe, helping connect World War II soldiers with their loved ones back home now, nearly 80 years after their service, we are finally able to recognize these extraordinary women on the national stage.”

Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., on his bipartisan legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to veterans of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 14. The only all-Black Women’s Army Corps unit deployed overseas, the Six Triple Eight handled an average of 65,000 pieces of mail per shift, for a total of 17 million by the war’s end. Of the battalion’s more than 850 members, only six are living.

“It’s overwhelming,” said retired Air Force Maj. Fannie Griffin McClendon, 101, of Tempe, Ariz., when told of the House’s unanimous vote. “It’s something I never even thought about. I don’t know if I can stand this.”

Ammo manufacturers help Ukraine

U.S. ammunition manufacturers are producing and donating millions of rounds of ammunition to support Ukraine in its fight for survival.

Ammo Inc. has donated a million rounds to Ukraine’s military. “We as Americans stand firmly in support of Ukraine’s sovereignty and independence,” said Fred Wagenhals, chief executive officer of Ammo Inc. “While we fervently hope for a quick and peaceful resolution to the crisis and that diplomacy will win the day, we condemn the Russian aggression and its threat to Ukraine’s territorial integrity and freedom ... We are prepared to move quickly as possible to

support Ukraine as it continues to defend itself and its freedom.”

Likewise, Remington, CCI, Speer and Federal Ammunition – which are part of Vista Outdoor Inc. – have donated a million rounds to the Ukraine Armed Forces.

“The war in Ukraine has displaced millions of citizens and exposed average people to the horrors of war,” said Jason Vanderbrink, president of Remington, CCI, Speer and Federal Ammunition. “We have long supported Ukrainian armed forces and we will continue to do so in this global cause to unite for democracy.”



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Should you join the Great Resignation?

What's being called the "Great Resignation" began in 2021, when millions of Americans left their jobs. Contrary to recent trends, the biggest uptick of job-hoppers and career-changers was among those in the middle of their working lives. I've also heard this movement called the "Great Recalibration," as people reassess what they value most.

I've written about the peril of letting your emotions drive your investment decisions. From a monetary perspective, there's probably no bigger "investment" decision for most Americans than how and where they choose to earn their livelihood. Should you find yourself yearning to join the Great Resignation/Calibration crowd, here are six financial factors to build into your calculus:

Vesting schedule If your employer or prospective employer provides matching or profit-sharing contributions to your retirement plan, the vesting schedule dictates when that money becomes yours. It could happen all at once, or in increments. Understanding where you currently stand can help you avoid leaving money on the table as you leave your current employer. Plus, it's something to consider as you assess a future employer's offerings.

Time off The ability to recharge, enjoy friends and family, and jet or drive off to see the world – knowing that your paycheck will not be affected – is a beautiful thing. Often, time off accrues with time in a position, so don't lose sight of this valuable benefit.

Compensation structure A bonus can be great until circumstances, perhaps out of your control, cause it

to shrink or disappear. As you consider the greenness of other pastures, it's important to make an accurate comparison of pay.

Matching contributions schemes There's nothing negative about this form of employee benefit, but it can vary widely from employer to employer and should be considered as you compare opportunities.

Group life insurance According to the life insurance marketing and research firm LIMRA, 48% of workers have only life insurance provided by their employer. Don't lose sight of this as you contemplate a move, and ensure that changing your employer doesn't jeopardize coverage that protects the ones you love.

Overall benefits package value At my age, I didn't see a lot of value when USAA began to offer benefits for adoption and *in vitro* fertilization. However, I'm sure it was an exciting offering for a lot of folks. My point? Carefully evaluate benefits, what they cost and the elements you use, and include all that in your decision matrix.

Much goes into life-altering decisions like the ones workers across the country are making every day. A lot of evidence points to compensation as a factor in seeking change, but not necessarily *the* factor. As you or those you love contemplate a big move, be sure it's a logical decision based on what's important, now and into the future.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. legion.org/usaa

Legion Family days, nights in Milwaukee

In lieu of a parade, the 103rd American Legion National Convention will include Legion Family Day on Sunday, Aug. 28, at Milwaukee Oktoberfest.

The festival will be held at the lakefront War Memorial Center. Tickets are available to convention attendees for one of two sessions on Aug. 28. A \$300 Gold Ticket reserves a table for eight, and a \$15 individual Silver Ticket ensures standing room and a beverage, in the upper portion of the plaza where special programming will range from traditional dances to a 25-piece musical ensemble.

Proceeds will benefit the War Memorial Center and American Legion programs. To purchase tickets, go to legion.org/convention/resources.

American Legion Family Night with the Brewers

The Milwaukee Brewers will take on the Pittsburgh Pirates at American Family Field on Monday, Aug. 29, at 7:10 p.m. Tickets range from \$9 to \$20, and can be purchased online at brewers.com/americanlegion.



Return to sender

Even though it has the highest COVID-19 death toll in the Middle East, Iran recently rejected and returned 820,000 doses of coronavirus vaccines donated by Poland, after government authorities learned that the shots were manufactured in the United States. As AP reports, the Iranian government says it has fully vaccinated 90% of its older-than-18 population.

"Iran has relied on Sinopharm, the state-backed Chinese vaccine, but offers citizens a smorgasbord of other shots to choose from," including Russia's Sputnik V, India's Covaxin and Iran's own COVIran Barekat shot.



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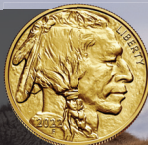
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Navy eyes unmanned fleet

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday wants the Navy to deploy large- and medium-sized unmanned surface vessels alongside carrier strike groups and amphibious ready groups by 2027-2028, or earlier.

In the early phase of deployment, the vessels "may be minimally manned," Gilday says. "But I want to be in a position where we can crawl-walk-run" and to "put us in a position where we can scale in the 2030s."

As Defense One reports, the Navy is looking at creating an enlisted specialty for remote operation of unmanned vessels.

New nations join U.N. Security Council

Five nations have taken seats as new rotating members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC): Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Albania, which joins the UNSC for the first time.

The 15-member Security Council – the U.N.'s most powerful body – includes the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China as permanent members, with other nations added on a regional and rotational basis. This is Brazil's 11th time on the UNSC. Gabon has served three times, as has Ghana. The UAE has served once before.

"More than 50 of the U.N.'s 193 member countries have never been elected to the council since it formed in 1946," the *Times of Israel* reports.

A mega-family tree

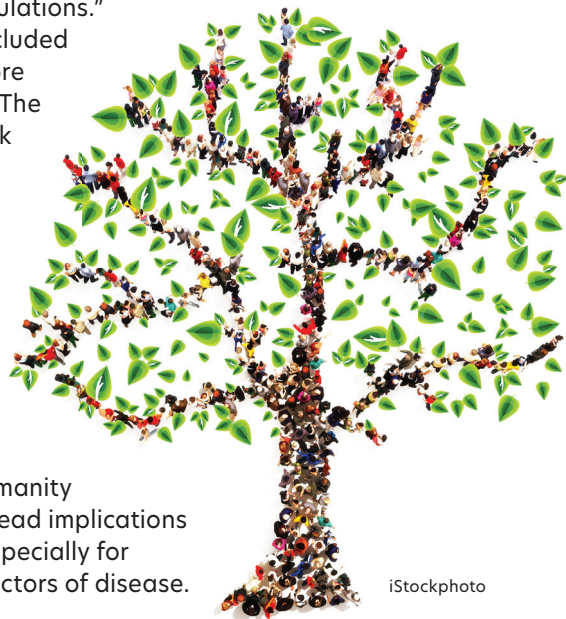
A research team at the University of Oxford has drawn the world's – and history's – largest family tree.

As Study Finds reports, the Oxford team "combed through eight databases containing 3,609 different genome sequences from 215 populations."

Some of the datasets included information that was more than 100,000 years old. The resulting lineage network contained almost 27 million ancestors.

Experts describe this effort as "a major step towards mapping the entirety of human relationships, with a single lineage that traces the ancestry of all people on Earth."

In addition, this all-humanity family tree "has widespread implications for medical research," especially for identifying genetic predictors of disease.



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Nitric oxide won the Nobel Prize in 1998. It's why "the little blue pill" works. Thousands of studies confirm NO is the key to performance.

And this new discovery increases nitric oxide availability resulting in even quicker, stronger and longer-lasting pleasure.

One double-blind, placebo-controlled study (the "gold-standard" of research) involved a group of 60-year-old-men.

They didn't exercise. They didn't eat healthy. And researchers reported their "nitric oxide availability was almost totally compromised," resulting in HALF the blood flow of a man in his peak.

But only five minutes after the first dose their blood flow increased dramatically, almost back to levels of a perfectly healthy 31-year-old man! "It's amazing," remarks nitric oxide expert Dr. Al Sears. "That's like giving 60-year-old men the power of 30-year-olds."



WHY SO MUCH EXCITEMENT?

Despite the billions men spend annually on older nitric oxide therapies, there's one well-known problem with them.

They don't always work.

A world renown physician explains why. He's studied nitric oxide for over 43 years. He is the physician-in-chief at a notable hospital in Boston. He says a "deficiency of bioactive nitric oxide... leads to impaired endothelium-dependent vasorelaxation."

In plain English, these older products may increase levels of

nitric oxide. But that's only half the battle. If it's not bioactively available then your body can't absorb it and won't perform.

Experts simply call it the nitric oxide "glitch." And until now, there's never been a solution.

5th GENERATION NITRIC OXIDE FORMULA FLYING OFF SHELVES

Upon further research, America's No. 1 men's health expert Dr. Al Sears discovered certain nutrients fix this "glitch" resulting in significantly better improvement in blood flow.

He's combined those nutrients with proven nitric oxide boosters in a new formula called Primal Max Red. In clinical trials, 5,000 mg is required for satisfying performance. Primal Max Red contains a bigger, 9,000 mg per serving dose. It's become so popular, he's having trouble keeping it in stock.

Dr. Sears is the author of more than 500 scientific papers. Thousands of people listened to him speak at the recent Palm Beach Health & Wellness Festival featuring Dr. Oz. NFL Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Namath visited his clinic, the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine.

Primal Max Red has only been available for a few months — but everyone who takes it reports a big difference. "I have the energy to perform three times in one day, WOW! That has not happened in years. Oh, by the way I am 62," says Jonathan K. from Birmingham, AL.

HOW IT WORKS

Loss of staying power starts with your blood vessels. Specifically, the inside layer called the endothelium where nitric oxide is made.

The problem is various factors thicken your blood vessels as you age. This blocks availability causing the nitric oxide "glitch." The result is difficulty in getting and sustaining healthy blood flow.

How bad is the problem?

Researcher shows the typical 40-year-old man absorbs 50% less nitric oxide. At 50, that drops to 25%. And once you pass 60 just a measly 15% gets through.

To make matters worse, nitric oxide levels start declining in your 30s. And by 70, nitric oxide



A new discovery that increases nitric oxide availability was recently proven in a clinical trial to boost blood flow 275% resulting in even quicker, stronger and longer-lasting performance.

production is down an alarming 75%.

Primal Max Red is the first formula to tackle both problems. Combining powerful nitric oxide boosters and a proven delivery mechanism that defeats the nitric oxide "glitch" resulting in significantly better blood flow. There's not enough space here to fully explain how it works, so Dr. Sears will send anyone who orders Primal Max Red a free special report that explains everything.

MORE CLINICAL RESULTS

Nutrients in Primal Max Red have logged impressive results.

In a Journal of Applied Physiology study, one resulted in 6 times MORE nitric oxide. And these increased levels lasted up to 12 hours.

"I measured my nitric oxide levels, you can buy a test kit from Amazon," reports 48-year-old Jeff O. "Monday night I showed depleted."

Then he used ingredients in Primal Max Red and, "The results were off the charts. I first woke around 3 a.m. on Tuesday ready to go. My nitric oxide levels measured at the top end of the range."

FREE BONUS TESTOSTERONE BOOSTER

Every order also gets Dr. Sears testosterone boosting formula Primal Max Black for free.

"If you want the performance you had in your younger days, you need nitric oxide to get you going. And

testosterone for energy and drive," says Dr. Sears. "You get both with Primal Max Red and Primal Max Black."

HOW TO GET PRIMAL MAX

To secure free bottles of Primal Max Black and get the hot, new Primal Max Red formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-906-4472** within the next 48 hours. "It's not available in drug stores yet," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about Primal Max, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. "Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back," he says.

The hotline will be open for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number will be shut down to allow them to restock. Call **1-800-906-4472** to secure your limited supply of Primal Max Red and free bottles of Primal Max Black. You don't need a prescription, and those who call in the first 24 hours qualify for a significant discount. Use Promo Code **AMLPMX0422** when you call in. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered.

How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information online at legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are free.

Notices will remain online until the final day of the reunion. Upon submission, allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing twice a year.**

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, phone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206** or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are free.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.**

Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**.

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your American Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**. Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

366th Ftr Assn, New Orleans, 8/17-20, Paul Jacob, (614) 906-4470, gunfighter.danang6970@gmail.com; **527th Aggressor Sqdn**, North Myrtle Beach, SC, 9/8-11, Fred Elizondo, (269) 788-2079, felizondo50@gmail.com; **AF Nuclear Wpns Tech Assn**, Las Vegas, 9/25-27, Janice Miller, (325) 650-1854, garjans@suddenlink.net; **Ramey AFB Historical Assn**, San Diego, 5/3-7, Elton Lanier, (309) 251-1740, mrzip@mtco.com; **Spooky AC-47 Gunship (Vietnam)**, Branson, MO, 9/7-11, Junior Skinner, (918) 949-5757, juncherski@yahoo.com

ARMY

2nd Inf Div, Kansas City, MO, 9/28-10/2, Mike Davino, (919) 498-1910, zida.pao@charter.net; **4th Bn 9th Inf Rgt (Manchu)**, Oklahoma City, 9/14-18, Bob Iannon, (317) 745-4287, [\[hotmail.com\]\(mailto:hotmail.com\); **7th Bn 13th Arty 1st Field Force, All Btrys \(Vietnam, 1966-1970\)**, Gatlinburg, TN, 8/21-26, Kevin Calkins, \(630\) 542-1095; **12th Armd Div Assn**, Abilene, TX, 7/27-31, Allan Dear, \(229\) 630-5682, \[dear5@earthlink.net\]\(mailto:dear5@earthlink.net\); **25th Inf Div**, Honolulu, 9/25-10/2, Sarah Krause, \(215\) 880-0181, \[tropicltn@aol.com\]\(mailto:tropicltn@aol.com\); **27th Inf Rgt \(Wolfhounds\) Hist Society**, Lexington, KY, 8/15-21, Dave Shepherd, \(859\) 445-2281, \[shepd227@gmail.com\]\(mailto:shepd227@gmail.com\); **77th FA Rgt**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/14-18, John Moran, \(937\) 361-1333, \[johnjanmoran@woh.rr.com\]\(mailto:johnjanmoran@woh.rr.com\); **101st Abn Div Vietnam Vets**, Fayetteville, NC, 8/24-28, Ron Long, \(310\) 977-4253, \[ronlong71@msn.com\]\(mailto:ronlong71@msn.com\); **106th Inf Div**, Arlington, VA, 8/24-28, Wayne Dunn, \(410\) 409-1141, \[host106th@106thinfdivassn.org\]\(mailto:host106th@106thinfdivassn.org\); **179th ASHC**, Reno, NV, 10/11-13, Tom Messenger, \(708\) 203-6096, \[tomvsgolf@hotmail.com\]\(mailto:tomvsgolf@hotmail.com\); **213th ASHC Black Cats**, Omaha, NE, 9/18-23, Larry Brockman, \(402\) 499-9117, \[brocky287@gmail.com\]\(mailto:brocky287@gmail.com\); **504th MP Bn**, Charleston, SC, 9/13-15, Tony Sills, \(770\) 330-5236, \[ctsills7147@bellsouth.net\]\(mailto:ctsills7147@bellsouth.net\); **864th Eng Bn \(Pacemakers\)**, Albuquerque, NM, 10/19-23, Maxine Scriptor, \(505\) 249-8238, \[mrsanagramssister@hotmail.com\]\(mailto:mrsanagramssister@hotmail.com\); **Arizona Army Security Agency Assn**, Tucson, AZ, 8/19-21, Gerald Darr, \(480\) 507-6825, \[ardf308@gmail.com\]\(mailto:ardf308@gmail.com\); **B Co Army Security Agency Grp & Camp Alamo - Former Mbrs, Dets J, K, L, M, SAD, VUNC & Div Radar Site**, San Antonio, 10/19-23, Ted Heffernan, \(719\) 357-0565, \[asabuffalo@yahoo.com\]\(mailto:asabuffalo@yahoo.com\); **pinerivertrader@aol.com**; **D Co 40th Armor**, Branson, MO, 5/9-12, Rich McCarty, \(573\) 893-4516, \[richardmccarty2017@yahoo.com\]\(mailto:richardmccarty2017@yahoo.com\); **Society of the 3rd Inf Div**, Kansas City, MO, 8/25-28, Toby Knight, \(210\) 885-2137, \[tobster16@gmail.com\]\(mailto:tobster16@gmail.com\); **Veterans of the First Eng Bn**, Herndon, VA, 9/16-19, Tom Jennings, \(732\) 618-1683, \[tomandgeri07@gmail.com\]\(mailto:tomandgeri07@gmail.com\), \[firstengineerbattalionveterans.org\]\(mailto:firstengineerbattalionveterans.org\)](mailto:bobi99@</p>
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MARINES

3/11 Mar "Btry Adjust," Kansas City, MO, 9/20-25, Brian Seals, (765) 580-2734, bseals2013@gmail.com; **C-1-12 Mar (Vietnam)**, Kansas City, MO, 9/20-25, Woody Hall, (931) 242-8432,

hwoodrow@charter.net; **Fifth Mar Div Assn**, San Diego, 5/11-15, Kathy Tinsley, (619) 770-0257, finally@cox.net; **Kilo 3/7 Vietnam**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 9/29-10/3, Bill Gerke, (631) 433-8575, msggerke@aol.com; **Mar Air Grps (WWII-2022)**, Branson, MO, 10/11-14, Ken Davidson, grasusan9583@sbcglobal.net

NAVY

Algol AKA 54, Cape Girardeau, MO, 9/28-10/2, Mearlin Allen, (573) 334-5827, mallen1065@yahoo.com; **Ashtabula AO 51**, Green Bay, WI, 7/13-16, Bruce Rosenberg, (920) 425-3168, ashtabula2020@gmail.com; **Bainbridge DLGN/CGN 25**, Las Vegas, 9/18-22, Charles Gilbert, (412) 609-1035, charlesgilbert63@gmail.com; ussbainbridgeassociation.org; **Bennington CV/CV/CVS 20**, San Antonio, 10/17-20, Ron Christensen, (402) 677-3413, ronc2@abbnebraska.com; **Canopus AS 34**, Oklahoma City, 10/4-6, Bill Murdock, (530) 913-1038, cwmcdf@jps.net; **CBMU 302**, Rapid City, SD, 10/27-30, Tom Vandenberg, (509) 520-5396, tavandenberg@pocketinet.com; **Davidson DE/FF 1045**, San Antonio, 10/19-23, Mike Peck, (952) 380-7616, davidson1045@msn.com; **Enterprise CVAN/CVN 65**, Las Vegas, 9/20-24, Bruce Mooberry, (316) 619-1268, brucemooberry@gmail.com; **Epperson DD 719**, Branson, MO, 9/28-10/1, Samuel White, (906) 635-5993, sammr.white@gmail.com; **Ernest G. Small DD/DDR 838**, Charleston, SC, 9/29-10/1, Judi Pearson, (501) 944-4472, judipearson@ussernestgsmall.org; **Essex CV/CVA/CVS 9 & LHD 2**, Harrisburg, PA, 9/6-11, Thomas Ferelli, (602) 882-0375, tferelli@gmail.com; **Frank Knox DD/DDR 742**, Wilmington, NC, 9/20-23, William Atkinson, (713) 648-8147, mrbl150@aol.com; **Goldsbrough DDG 20**, Tucson, AZ, 9/25-29, William Biller, (419) 680-0025, pibiller@gmail.com; **Grand Canyon AD/AR 28**, Chattanooga, TN, 9/12-16, Ken Morales, (618) 488-6475, k.morales1949@yahoo.com; **Holder**, Norfolk, VA, 9/21-24, Jim deBarrios, (831) 458-9062, ussholder_dde819@hotmail.com; **Iwo Jima Class LPHs Assn**, Warwick, RI, 9/27-10/2, Dena Rice, (615) 585-2088, denaiphone@bellsouth.net; **Lassen AE 3**, Virginia Beach, VA,

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10/5-8, Kurt Julsen, (907) 632-9961, aesakj@yahoo.com; **Leary DD 879**, Quad Cities, IL, 9/12-18, Al Redden, (308) 530-1284, alshr@allophe.com; **Litchfield County LST 901**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/17-20, Don Lerche, (309) 530-8710, donlerche@yahoo.com; **LST Assn**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/17-20, Angela D'Aloisio, (803) 865-5665, support@nehemiahcommunications.com; **Mauna Loa AE 8**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/5-8, Kurt Julsen, (907) 632-9961, aesakj@yahoo.com; **Mazama AE 9**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/5-8, Kurt Julsen, (907) 632-9961, aesakj@yahoo.com; **Missouri BB 63**, Charleston, SC, 9/9-11, Jerry Miller, (417) 247-7744, jjmusn@aol.com; **Mount Baker AE 4/34**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/5-8, Kurt Julsen, (907) 632-9961, aesakj@yahoo.com; **Mount McKinley AGC 7/LCC 7**, Kansas City, MO, 9/14-18, Wes Brubacher, (707) 857-3522, webob@vbbn.com; **Neches AO 47**, Branson, MO, 9/15-18, Johnny Hanlon, (918) 760-7371, johnnyhanlon@cox.net; **New Jersey BB 62**, Cherry Hill, NJ, 8/3-7, Bob Dingman, (603) 455-4441, bb621967@comcast.net; **Ogden LPD 5 NFZV**, Pensacola, FL, 11/10-13, Mark Stephens, (570) 640-1094, 2143mark@gmail.com; **Park County LST 1077**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/17-20, Mike Kempf, (317) 490-4229, m.w.kempf@sbcglobal.net; **Perry DD 844**, San Antonio, 10/18-22, Joan Guariniello, (727) 868-9368, jandlassoc@aol.com; **Prichett DD 561**, Omaha, NE, 9/12-16, Terry Crawford, (618) 259-3007, prichett@charter.net; **Providence CLG 6**, Charleston, SC, 10/5-9, Jim Chryst, (973) 222-5499, jchryst@embarqmail.com; **Rainier AE 5**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/5-8, Kurt Julsen, (907) 632-9961, aesakj@yahoo.com; **Reasoner FF 1063**, San Diego, 9/16-18, Del Becker, (717) 537-5732, ff1063reunion@gmail.com; **Robert E. Lee SSBN/SSN 601**, Mystic, CT, 10/26-30, Joe White, (405) 410-9206, jwhite.ag68@shelterinsurance.com; **Saginaw LST 1188**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/17-20, Angela D'Aloisio, (803) 865-5665, support@nehemiahcommunications.com; **Saratoga CV 3 & CVA/CV 60**, Herndon, VA, 10/12-16, Mark Beecher, (304) 917-1206, bizmark@mercurycat.com; **Shasta AE 6/33**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/5-8, Kurt Julsen, (907) 632-9961, aesakj@yahoo.com; **Spiegel LSD 32**,

Columbus, OH, 10/12-16, Jim Yoder, (623) 853-9913, lsd32usn@gmail.com; **Sutter County LST 1150**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/17-20, Guy Simmons, (978) 476-3895, guysimmons@aol.com; **Tolovana AO 64**, Albuquerque, NM, 9/20-22, Okie Baughman, (321) 795-3940, okie_baughman@yahoo.com, usstolovana.org; **Valley Forge CV 45/LPH 8**, King of Prussia, PA, 5/11-14, Ron Andrews, (636) 265-3119, jjmusn@aol.com; **VP-4 Patrol Sqdn Four**, San Antonio, 10/12-16, Larry Hames, (503) 688-9804, larry.hames@vp4association.com; **Waller DD/DDE 466**, Nashville, TN, 10/9-13, Keith Lemons, (606) 365-2902, schulerlemons98@gmail.com; **Wexford County LST 1168**, Jacksonville, FL, 10/17-20, Larry Condra, (314) 604-5221, larrygeec@netscape.net; **Will Rogers SSBN 659**, Groton, CT, 6/16-19, Earl Colella, (734) 730-1026, earl.colella@comcast.net

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Post 240, FL: Nick LaBianca, Clayton H. McPhaul, Robert P. Spence
Post 254, FL: Michael Spinnato
Post 111, IN: Ronald D. Marshall
Post 11, MN: Ken Anderson, Don Duncanson, Don Giroux, Donald Krueger, William Mickelson, Allen Sigafus

IN SEARCH OF

2nd Msl Bn 82nd Arty Corporal Missile (Kitzingen, Germany, 1961-1963), Michael DeTorie, (443) 825-6239
307th ASA Bn (Ludwigsburg, Germany, 1974-1976), Don Novak, (270) 601-3444, dn13209@yahoo.com
867th FA Bn (280mm) (Neckarsulm, Germany, 1954-1956), James Degnan, (661) 294-0256, my4cam@aol.com
Boxer LPH 4 Air Dept Hangar Deck Crew (1964-1965), Mike Rawlings, (928) 699-2448, mrawlings1944@gmail.com
Cargo Handling Bns, NCHF & NELSF Staff, Michael Gorton, (718) 386-8017, mgorton@msn.com

Howitzer Btry 3rd Sqdn 2nd ACR (Amberg, West Germany, 1974-1978), David Sanders, (601) 381-3572

Johnston AFB - 10th ADG, 10th ADS, 25th ADS, 24th SS, Thor-related activities (1960-1975), dottavi@juno.com

TAPS

Ronald G. Cherry, Dept. of Texas. Dept. Cmdr. 1998, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Memb. 2008-2018, Nat'l Conv. Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2005-2008, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 1998-2004, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 2000-2004, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 2004-2008, Nat'l Internal Affairs Cmsn. Liaison Cmte. Memb. 2004-2005, Nat'l Subcmte. on Cmtes. Memb. 2004-2008 and Nat'l Veterans Affairs & Rehab. Cncl. Memb. 2018-2022.
Kenneth D. Danilson, Dept. of Iowa. Nat'l Advisory Cmte. to the Nat'l Cmdr. Memb. 1999-2018, Nat'l American Legion Charities Chmn. 2013-2015, Nat'l Centennial Task Force for the Future Chmn. 2011-2013, Nat'l Child Welfare Foundation Memb. 1992-1998 and 2008-2015, Nat'l Child Welfare Foundation Secretary 1998-2008, Nat'l Citizens Flag Alliance Advisory Cmte. Memb. 1998-2015, Nat'l Finance Cmsn. Memb. 1988-1997, Nat'l Finance Cmsn. Vice Chmn. 1997-1998, Nat'l Finance Cmsn. Chmn. 1998-2015, Nat'l Marketing Cmsn. Chmn. 2015-2018, Nat'l Media & Comm. Cncl. Memb. 2018-2022 and Nat'l Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Memb. 1998-2015.
David D. Heath, Dept. of Indiana. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1987-1991, Nat'l Distinguished Guest Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2010-2013, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1990-1991, Nat'l Legis. Cmsn. Memb. 1992-2001, Nat'l Military Affairs Cmte. Consultant 1991-1992 and Nat'l Veterans Employment & Education Cncl. Memb. 2013-2015.
John F. Sommer Jr., Dept. of Ohio. Dept. Cmdr. (Honorary) 2010, Nat'l Citizens Flag Alliance Advisory Cmte. Ex-Officio Memb. 1994-2009 and Nat'l Exec. Director, Washington, DC, Office 1991-2009.

My boss asked me to start my presentation with a joke. So I used my paycheck as the first slide.

I QUIT MY JOB at the helium factory today. I refuse to be spoken to in that tone of voice.

WHY IS A DIET called a “diet”? Because all the other four-letter words were taken.

A NEWLY ORDAINED PASTOR was attempting to comfort the widow of an eccentric man who had just died. Standing before the open casket, the nervous young man said, “I realize this must be a difficult blow for you, Mrs. Smith. Just try to remember that what we see before us is only the husk, the shell, of your dear husband. The nut has gone to heaven.”

A CELEBRITY is someone who works hard all her life to become famous and then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized.

IT’S BEEN RAINING for days, and my husband seems depressed about it. He just stands by the window, staring. If it continues, I’m going to have to let him in.

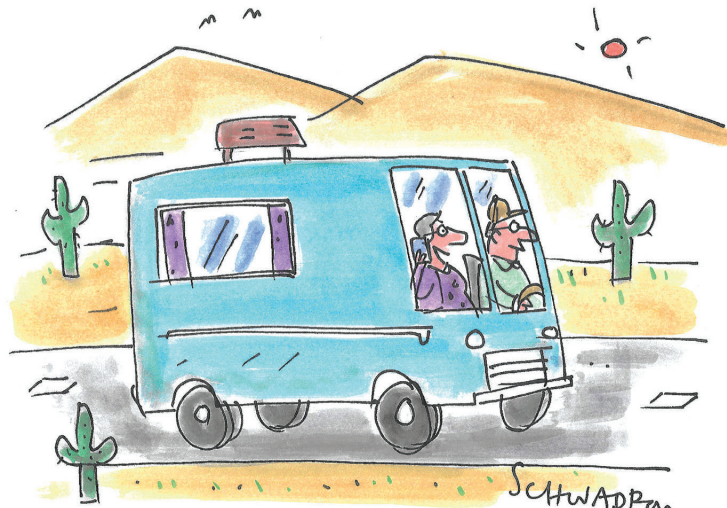
IF THE EARLY BIRD catches the worm, I’ll sleep in until there are pancakes.

WHY DO AMERICANS choose from just two people to run for president and 51 for Miss America?

I RECEIVED another letter from a lawyer’s office yesterday. It had “final notice” stamped on the envelope. Guess they won’t be bothering me anymore!

IF YOU THINK it’s hard to meet new people, pick up the wrong golf ball on the course sometime.

“THE GUY who invented the wheel was an idiot. The guy who invented the other three? He was the genius.” – Sid Caesar



“Our grown children can’t move back in with us if we keep on the move.”



“I told you to leave the plumber alone.”



“Hearing no objections, the motion passes.”



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